

Kent
1966



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25 D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

4 March 1966

Honorable John W. Macy, Jr.
Executive Secretary
President's Distinguished Civilian
Service Awards Board
U.S. Civil Service Commission
Washington, D. C. 20415

Dear Mr. Macy:

My nomination for the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service is Mr. Sherman Kent, Director of National Estimates in the Central Intelligence Agency.

I believe that Mr. Kent's leadership in the development and improvement of the National Intelligence Estimate and his outstanding service in the intelligence community of the United States merit public recognition. He has made most significant contributions to this Agency and has had a major role in elevating the production of intelligence into a highly specialized profession. This is substantiated in the enclosed document which is forwarded for the Board's review.

Sincerely,

STATINTL



W. F. Raborn
Director

Enclosure

SHERMAN KENT
Biographic Data

Birth: 1 December 1903, Chicago, Illinois

Education: 1922-26: Yale College, Ph. B., English
1926-33: Yale University, Ph. D., History
1932 : Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques, Paris
1947 : Guggenheim Fellow

Service Record:

Mr. Kent has spent 20 years in-government service in the Central Intelligence Agency and its predecessor organizations. Prior to World War II he was Assistant Professor of history at Yale, 1936-40, and Director of General Studies, Yale Graduate School, 1940-41. From 1941 to 1946 he served first with the Office of Coordination of Information, thereafter with its successor organization, the Office of Strategic Services. In OSS, Mr. Kent directed research and analysis on Europe, Africa, and the Near East. With the transfer of these activities to the State Department at the war's end, he became Acting Director of the Office of Research and Intelligence of the State Department, which position he held until June 1946. He served as a member of the resident civilian faculty of the National War College in the fall term of 1946. In 1947, as a Guggenheim Fellow, he wrote "Strategic Intelligence," and later that year he returned to Yale University as Professor of history.

CIA Employment:

In January 1951 Mr. Kent joined the Central Intelligence Agency as a member of the Board of National Estimates. One year later he was appointed as Director of National Estimates and Chairman of the Board of National Estimates. Since that time, for 15 years, he has held these two positions simultaneously under four successive Directors of Central Intelligence. The Board of National Estimates, under the authority of the Director of Central Intelligence, produces the National Intelligence Estimate in fulfillment of the Director's statutory responsibility to provide intelligence affecting the national security to the President of the United States and the National Security Council. High-level officials have come to rely increasingly on the National Intelligence Estimate which is judged a document of utmost importance to the Nation's security. To a remarkable extent, its usefulness and prestige are reflections of Mr. Kent's personal contribution.

CITATION

An eminent and brilliant expert in foreign intelligence, he has been responsible for the development of the National Intelligence Estimate, a document of utmost importance to the Nation's security.

Through dynamic personal leadership and productive efforts, he has welded the complex arts of intelligence research and analysis into a highly developed profession vitally significant for the furtherance of our country's international objectives.

Summary of Achievement

Mr. Sherman Kent, a top expert on foreign affairs and the premier theoretician and leading architect of the American intelligence system, has long played a key role in the production of National Estimates and in making our intelligence mechanism increasingly effective and more responsive in times of crisis. Mr. Kent's name has become synonymous with the National Intelligence Estimate not only within the U. S. Government, but in intelligence and foreign policy circles throughout the world. Under his imaginative and inspired leadership, the National Intelligence Estimate has attained great prestige and stature. 'The very high regard in which the National Estimate is held by United States policy-makers and officials conducting our foreign affairs and the increasing demands from the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for specific estimates prior to deliberating crucial policy questions is testimony to the success of Mr. Kent's leadership.

Mr. Kent's book, "Strategic Intelligence," first published in 1949, is a landmark in the field of intelligence research and analysis. Utilizing his wartime experience and his appreciation of strategic problems, enhanced by his association with the National War College, he developed a theory of the intelligence process which was adopted by the Government and effectuated through a series of organizational and personnel changes in the Central Intelligence Agency beginning in 1950.

In addition to his fifteen years of service as Director of National Estimates, Mr. Kent has served as a member of the inner cabinets of four successive Directors of Central Intelligence. In this capacity he has contributed notably to the general policy administration and development of the Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence community.

Mr. Kent's specific achievements cannot be heralded and thus are unknown to most of the public, but paraphrasing President Johnson when he announced the winners of the 1964 Distinguished Federal Civilian Service Awards, we in CIA say Sherman Kent "stands tall" among those "who serve their country and their fellow citizens with great distinction."

Additional Details

Mr. Kent's specialty throughout his career in CIA has been the production of finished substantive intelligence, both longer range national estimates--predictions of future developments affecting United States' national security--and evaluations and warnings concerning foreign developments in the more immediate time frame. For fifteen years Mr. Kent has sat at the apex of the intelligence community of this country as Director for National Estimates. In this capacity he has had the vital responsibility of coordinating intelligence analyses and preparing objective Estimates for the President and policy-making bodies in government.

The National Intelligence Estimate is produced through an elaborate coordination process involving full and active participation by all member agencies and departments of the United States intelligence community. Despite the complexities of the coordination process, the estimative machinery has become flexible enough under Mr. Kent's stewardship to respond in a matter of hours to the needs of policymakers for appraisals of crisis situations. It is a tribute to Mr. Kent that the estimative process flows so smoothly and with a minimum of friction and that the final published Estimate is a truly objective document.

In addition to his responsibilities for the estimates program, Mr. Kent has been called upon to deliver critically important briefings to officials at the highest levels of the United States Government. His advice and counsel have been sought by senior intelligence officials, including professionals in intelligence operations and appropriate intelligence chiefs in other countries of the free world. His personal and professional rapport with these foreign intelligence officials has had on many occasions a salutary effect on political and defense relationships between the United States Government and its Allies.

When Mr. Kent came to the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951, his objective was to develop intelligence into a highly specialized profession which would attract the best minds in the country. He had a clear understanding of what needed to be done and as an advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence, he played a major role in giving concrete meaning to the concepts and procedures he had previously expounded as a scholar and observer. He has continued throughout his career in CIA and the intelligence community to make contributions to intelligence doctrine and practices. He serves as chairman of the Board of Editors of the publication, "Studies in Intelligence." This is a journal, founded by Mr. Kent, which publishes for the entire intelligence community classified and unclassified studies on the theory, doctrine, art, and history of intelligence.

Benefits

The benefits of Mr. Kent's services as a theoretician and architect of our intelligence system and a producer of National Estimates can be measured by comparing the system of producing intelligence today with the haphazard process of intelligence analysis and evaluation which prevailed at the time of Pearl Harbor. The contributions of Mr. Kent can be best evaluated by those who have intimate knowledge of the role intelligence has had during the last fifteen years in protecting the security of our country and in furthering our foreign policy objectives.

The accuracy, quality, and quantity of National Estimates, produced under the direction of Mr. Kent, have been praised by four Presidents and top-level officials in their administrations. The development and advancement of the estimative process into an art of the highest competence is recognized in the intelligence community as a unique contribution of the greatest significance. Our estimative process is and will continue to be a vital element in the structure of government which will affect the security of our country and the future of the world.

An intangible but very far-reaching benefit of Mr. Kent's remarkably active and productive careers in the academic world and in the intelligence community is the profound influence he has had on the attitudes and careers of many individuals in public service, particularly those young men and women who are now and will be participating in high-level positions in government. His guidance, encouragement, and uncompromising insistence on competence, accuracy, and intellectual objectivity and integrity, and the example he has set of being fearless, indefatigable, and totally dedicated to the best interests of our country are benefits which will enhance the contributions of Mr. Kent in the years to come.

Personal Qualities

Mr. Kent is an example of a brilliant historian-scholar who has turned his wide knowledge of the past and present to the strengthening of our national security. He has an impressive grasp of world affairs. His mind ranges easily from military hardware to tribal differences in Africa, from monetary problems in Far Eastern kingdoms to political personalities in Europe. His constant search for significant information is matched only by his capacity to integrate this information into a meaningful whole. He confounds his subordinates who are specialists with his competence in their chosen field.

Mr. Kent has accomplished his assigned mission and functions with an extremely small staff. He has selected his staff with great care and has given them every assistance and opportunity to develop into broad-gauged, sophisticated officers. He is greatly admired and respected by his peers and subordinates alike. He enjoys the intense loyalty of his staff, not because he is their chief, but because of his intellectual qualities and the personal consideration and support which he extends to all of them.

Through his personality and dedication, he has established for himself and his Office a reputation for objectivity and professionalism. The Office of National Estimates is consequently regarded as one of the most attractive and stimulating places in the U. S. Government to work.

The Board of National Estimates, of which Mr. Kent is the Chairman, has numbered among its members distinguished academicians, career ambassadors, and military officers of flag rank. These men have joined the Board after many years of varied service in their parent organizations. It is a mark of Mr. Kent's great personal and professional qualities that he can attract such distinguished citizens to work in the field of intelligence. Each one of these men has commented on Mr. Kent's brilliant, dynamic and stimulating leadership, the challenging work, and his impressive staff.

It is the consensus of senior officials in the Central Intelligence Agency that Mr. Kent has made immense contributions to the effectiveness of the Agency and the foreign intelligence activities of our country. He exemplifies to an exceptional degree the outstanding characteristics of distinguished service: that extra measure of professional excellence, integrity, imagination, courage, and dedication to country.

Awards

Mr. Kent was awarded the National Civil Service League Career Service Award in 1961 and was cited for his distinguished service in the development of the Central Intelligence Agency and of intelligence as a profession.